

Twenty-One Pitches

Common sense alone would dictate that
some are still waiting, some of those
who sat in the prison yard in the blistering sun

on a day forty years ago watching Tex pitch
for the prison team against a visiting squad
from a nearby town, some of those in that

monotony of drab-gray garb packed into
the bleachers row on row punctuated only
by guards dressed in blue and sunglasses

stationed at the end of the bleachers and
armed with riot guns. No doubt some
are still waiting, doing hard time recalling

that dusty, searing afternoon on a field
surrounded by high stone walls, somewhere
in the middle innings the score as tight

as a cell door on lock-down, when Tex threw
twenty-one pitches to one hitter, twenty
fouled off, spoiled, spinning away, each

like a year of his life in stir, out of play.
With each pitch the excitement swelled.
The cons always cheered for the visiting team

and were wondering after five or six,
how long it could go on, through the seventeenth
or eighteenth pitch, when the hitter,